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Nova Scotia International Student Program

A consortium project of the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education, Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education, Halifax Regional Centre for Education, South Shore Regional Centre for Education, Strait Regional Centre for Education, and Tri-County Regional Centre for Education in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

April 15, 2020

Dear Parents,

Greetings from Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia International Student Program. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for sending your child to Nova Scotia for their education. Certainly, the current situation of COVID-19 is nothing any of us could have predicted so we wanted to reach out and let you know a little more about how we are supporting your children while they finish their year with us.

Our provincial government has closed all public schools until May 1, 2020 and has declared a State of Emergency urging all Nova Scotians to practice “physical distancing” to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As a result, your child has had limitations put on their social and academic lives while we work together to combat this pandemic.

That said, we want you to feel connected to your child and those who support them. Below is a list of suggestions to help you be aware of how your child is progressing and know how to help them if they require additional support:

- We encourage you to have regular contact with your child. We know self-isolation is difficult and not part of the experience your child expected when coming to Canada. We encourage parents to talk to their children, especially “in person” by phone and by video chat so you can help monitor your child’s emotional state and mental health and well-being.
- Our Homestay Coordinators are connecting with students and host families to check-in on how everyone is doing. If your child needs support, please encourage them to talk with their Homestay Coordinators. Their role is to support your child and their host family too.
- Host families are also adjusting their behaviours and schedules to adapt to physical distancing. If there is an issue you feel is not appropriate to discuss with the host family, please contact your agent.
- Our program believes in a strong and positive relationship with our agents. Your selected agent will relay questions and concerns to our staff about your child. Please keep an open line of communication with your agent and do not hesitate to request their support. We will do the same and will inform them if we have any issues about your child.
- Academically, our schools are now delivering e-learning and learning at home plans. The learning will be delivered differently at each grade level. Your child will receive direction from their school on how to successfully continue their education. For the students in grade 9 and below this will be learning activities and some teacher contact. Your child has this opportunity to continue their schoolwork and to continue their connections with their teachers and classmates. Please encourage your child to take advantage of this opportunity and be fully engaged in online learning, or other forms of learning that will be made available this week.



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- If you have not already asked your child for the parent login information for PowerSchool, our online academic monitoring system, then please ask your child to share this information with you. PowerSchool lists all assignments, quizzes, and tests, and gives your child's marks for each course and assignment.
- Our program is hosting online contests and activities through our NSISP App. We are trying to be creative with ways to engage the students using technology so they can remain connected to their social networks, continue to practice English, and be engaged in society as much as possible. Please encourage your child to use their technology to connect with others.

Below is a list of resources for you to access if you have any general questions about our experience and directives with Covid-19:

- Message from the Minister of Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:
https://nsisp.ca/sites/default/files/minister_churchill_message_to_families.pdf
- NSISP has created a list of Frequently Asked Questions which can be found at:
https://nsisp.ca/sites/default/files/nsisp_covid_19_faq.pdf
- NS government Mental Health links for children, youth and families:
<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health/children-and-youth.asp>
- novascotia.ca/coronavirus
- canada.ca/coronavirus

Thank you for trusting us with your child during this difficult time. Our host families and our staff are all working together to brighten this experience as best they can. Thank you for your patience in helping us to support your child and for informing us if you have any concerns about their emotional well-being.

Yours truly,

Paul Millman
Executive Director, NSISP